

Co-Chairs and members of the Committee,

My name is Ryan Odinak, and I am a member of the Board of Directors of the CT Arts Alliance and past executive director of the Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County. These roles provide me with certain perspectives through which, as a Connecticut citizen, I urge you to:

**Preserve funding for the total allocation in the budget towards Arts, primarily for the competitive grant program that is identified in the State's annual budget as ARTS COMMISSION, as well as for the other Arts Lines, so long as the total is preserved. The total of these allocations is what is important. The *competitive process* for receiving Arts Funding through the State should be recognized and reinforced.**

As the past director of a regional service organization I am well aware of the impact these grants make to maintaining strong arts organizations across the state and leveraging other funding to support these organizations.

### **Change the way allocations are made from the Connecticut Arts Endowment Fund**

The Arts Endowment provides each qualified cultural organization meeting the criteria with some level of operating funding each year from the interest this fund generates. This is an important, although small, source of operating funds for cultural organizations. The applicant pool has been growing, but the wording in the statute regarding how funds may be allocated each year is not in line with best practices for endowments.

Changes are needed to help make the endowment a more affective source of basic operating funds for Arts and Cultural organizations in the state, reducing the pressures on the general fund. We are confident that the proposed legislation to change the way the funds are allocated and more in line with how standard endowments are managed, will better utilize the endowment for its intended purpose, while ensuring that the fund remains robust from year to year, at no cost to the State.

### **Preserve funding the 1% for Public Art requirement.**

One only has to observe the interaction of the public when in an environment with public art to see the value it brings. It creates a sense of place, beautifies buildings and grounds and creates dialogue among viewers.

The State's last Arts & Economic Prosperity study convincingly illustrated that **investing State dollars in the nonprofit arts and cultural industry pays back more than five and a half times in State revenues what the State provides in funding to the Arts** – *and those figures are quite conservative.*

The CT Arts & Economic Prosperity Study specifically found that Connecticut's nonprofit arts and culture industry annually:

- **Generates \$653 million in total economic activity**

- **Supports 18,314 full-time equivalent local jobs**
- **Generates \$462.5 million in local household income to residents**
- **Delivers \$59.1 million in local and state government**

**The arts and cultural sector is a revenue generating sector** that provides the state with dollars *that can be used to support those sectors that aren't able to generate funds for the state.* So when you cut funding to the arts, you also cut revenue the state can use.

Funding for the arts in CT represents only 3/100 of a percent of the budget. Please preserve funding for the arts in CT.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ryan Odinak